

P4, B10

From: Rachel Harvey [racheharvey@gmail.com]

Sent: Tuesday, April 24, 2012 2:07 PM

To: Chang, Stanley; Berg, Tom; Martin, Ernie; Anderson, Ikaika; Kobayashi, An
Gabbard, Tulsi; Cachola, Romy; Harimoto, Breene; Garcia, Nestor

Subject: Testimony on Bill 10

Aloha Council Members,

I am writing to comment in support of Bill 10. Regulating single-use plastic bags will help make Hawaii a model state for sustainable change.

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Hawaii, especially Oahu, is at a crucial moment for waste management. Despite the efforts of the H-Power waste-to-energy program, our facilities and landfills are overwhelmed. In 2006, H-Power and the landfill received 114,000 tons of plastic containers, bottles, and bags that could not be or were not recycled. According to an article in the Honolulu Advertiser (March 8, 2010), people on Oahu use an estimated "300 million bags or more annually." Legislating source reduction and behavior changing regulation is the targeted solution.

The harmful cost of single-use plastics stretches from the oil it takes to produce it, to the health of the consumer, to the cost of disposal, and finally to the marine ecosystems it wrecks. As you are well aware, patches of plastic pollution cover millions of square miles of ocean near Hawaii. Tragically, this plastic also ends up in the stomachs of marine birds and animals. Moreover, the creation and distribution of plastic products increases our polluting carbon emissions and dependence on fossil fuels. The U.S. goes through 100 billion plastic bags each year, requiring 12 million barrels of oil to produce, and less than 5% are ever recycled.

Reusable bags allow new avenues for marketing and save the retailer and consumer money. Reusable cloth and nylon bags can be purchased for a dollar (or are sometimes free) and used for years and years. Consumers actually pay around \$15 to \$37.50 a year in hidden costs for so-called free bags at check out. Further, reducing the consumption of single-use plastic bags will bring in money for our island and save money in clean-up costs. American cities spend an estimated \$64 billion in tax dollars for plastic bag clean up from roads, parks, and waterways. That's \$.17 per bag in San Francisco. A recent Los Angeles case study showed bag clean up costs at \$.21 per bag.

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This bill effectively addresses the issue of single-use check out bag plastic pollution by

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positively changing consumer behavior, decreasing external costs, and decreasing the amount of waste Hawaii produces. Bringing your own bag is simple and easy.

I am a community coordinator for Plastic Free Hawaii (Kailua Chapter) by the Kokua Hawaii Foundation. We are a coalition of community members and businesses striving to educate the stores, restaurants, residents, and visitors of Kailua on the environmental and health benefits of going plastic free. <http://plasticfreekailua.blogspot.com/>. I also point you to my editorial on Civil Beat: [Friend or Foam: The Perils of Single-Use Plastics](#)

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this matter.

Sincerely,

Rachel Harvey

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Rachel Harvey, PhD
Community Coordinator
Plastic Free Hawaii/ Kokua Hawaii Foundation

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4/24/2012